



Safe Food Handling for a Healthy Pregnancy Protect Your Baby and Yourself From Listeriosis

Pregnant women are at high risk for getting sick from *Listeria*, harmful bacteria found in many foods. *Listeria* can cause a disease called listeriosis. Listeriosis can result in miscarriage, premature delivery, serious sickness, or the death of a newborn baby. If you are pregnant, you need to know what foods are safe to eat.

How do I know if I have listeriosis?

Because the illness could take weeks to show up, you may not know you have it.

Early signs may include fever, chills, muscle aches, diarrhea, and upset stomach.

At first, you may feel like you have the flu.

Later on, you could have a stiff neck, headache, convulsions, or lose your balance.

Every year, 1,600 Americans become sick from listeriosis; 1 out of 6 will die from the illness.

What should I do if I think I have listeriosis?

Call your doctor, nurse, or health clinic if you have any of these signs. If you have listeriosis, your doctor can treat you.

What can I do to keep my food safe?

- *Listeria* can grow in the refrigerator. The refrigerator should be 40 °F or lower, and the freezer 0 °F or lower. Use a refrigerator thermometer to check your refrigerator's inside temperature.
- Clean up all spills in your refrigerator right away—especially juices from hot dog packages or raw meat or chicken/turkey.
- Clean the inside walls and shelves of your refrigerator with hot water and liquid soap, then rinse.
- Use precooked or ready-to-eat food as soon as you can. Don't store it in the refrigerator too long.
- Wash your hands after you touch hot dogs, raw meat, chicken, turkey, or seafood or their juices.

Fight Bacteria-Fight BAC!®

1. **Clean:** Wash hands often with soap and warm water. Use clean dishes, spoons, knives, and forks. Wash countertops with hot soapy water and clean up spills right away.
2. **Separate:** Keep raw meat, fish, and poultry away from other food that will not be cooked.
3. **Cook:** Cook food to a safe minimum internal temperature. Check with a food thermometer.
4. **Chill:** Refrigerate or freeze within 2 hours—refrigerate or freeze within 1 hour in hot weather (above 90 °F). Don't leave meat, fish, poultry, or cooked food sitting out.

What can I do to keep my baby and myself safe from listeriosis?

- **Do not eat** hot dogs, luncheon meats, bologna, or other deli meats **unless they are reheated** until steaming hot.
- **Do not eat** refrigerated pâté, meat spreads from a meat counter, or smoked seafood found in the refrigerated section of the store. Foods that don't need refrigeration, like canned tuna and canned salmon, **are okay to eat**. Refrigerate after opening.
- **Do not drink** raw (unpasteurized) milk and **do not eat** foods that have unpasteurized milk in them.
- **Do not eat** salads made in the store such as ham salad, chicken salad, egg salad, tuna salad, or seafood salad.
- **Do not eat** soft cheese such as Feta, queso blanco, queso fresco, Brie, Camembert cheeses, blue-veined cheeses, and Panela **unless** it is labeled as made with pasteurized milk. Make sure the label says, "**MADE WITH PASTEURIZED MILK.**"

For more information about listeriosis and food safety:

Chicago Department of Public Health
cityofchicago.org/health

Centers for Disease Control
cdc.gov/listeria/

Ask Karen
AskKaren.gov

